

The Impact of a Rural Based Personal Protective Equipment Program

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Abstract:

Agriculture is the most hazardous industry in the nation. Farmers perform chores which pose threats to their health and safety. They are repeatedly exposed to noise, chemicals, dust, mold, and the risk of physical injuries.

Although Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has been proven to prevent injury and promote farmer's health, access can be a limiting factor for rural populations, in turn, reducing their use of the PPE. Improving availability of PPE and encouraging proper use could reduce the risk of injury and illness.

The Northeast Center for Agricultural Health (NEC) has created a PPE program that offers a variety of selected products that are affordable and appropriate for farmers. Our program features convenient access, low costs, and an inventory of continually updated merchandise. Product sales are backed by trained professionals who can answer questions and offer consultations on proper use of PPE. NEC PPE is available at a number of agricultural expositions across New York. It is also available by mail using the NEC catalogue, which is now widely available in New York and Vermont.

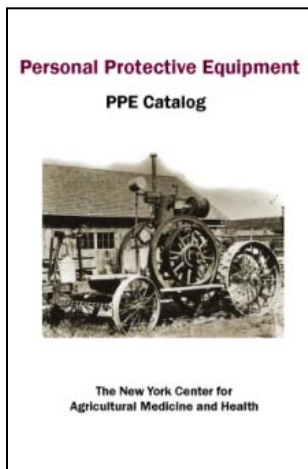
We conclude that: 1) farmers are interested in protecting themselves and their families; 2) promotion at farm events and direct sales are an effective way of improving availability of PPE; 3) this type of PPE program can be established for rural populations in other regions of the country.

Methods:

- Offer a wide variety of protection ranging from respirators and ear plugs to slow moving vehicle emblems and PTO shields
- Keep costs affordable
- Make PPE accessible to rural farming communities
- Make PPE available at major farm expositions through out the state
- Distribute our newly designed catalogs for sale opportunities
- Offer consultations for PPE purchases and proper use

To ensure we are meeting our customer's needs we;

- Conducted surveys at various farm trade shows
- Provide PPE that meets NIOSH and ANSI standards, as well as the requests of customers
- Collaborate with other farm safety programs



Results:

- Enhanced PPE sale.
- Number of rural customers has increased
- An increase in the number of places & shows PPE is available for purchase
- A current product line, offering various options in sizes and styles, including children's sizes
- Consultations have been effective in proper use of PPE
- Collaboration with different organizations such as Vermont Farm Health Task Force, Future Farmers of America Chapters and New Hampshire Department of Agriculture has increased awareness and sales

Results of Survey:

- Our previous product line was out dated
- Our current line offers more desired protection
- Hearing protection and safety glasses are the top two PPE items used
- When it comes to purchasing safety glasses, style is a factor
- 100% of people surveyed were satisfied with the products we offer

Conclusions:

- Farmers are interested in personal protection and safety for themselves and their families.
- The PPE that we offer meets both the wants & needs of our farming community.
- Promotion at farm events and direct sales are an effective way of improving availability of PPE.
- Collaboration can aid in establishing PPE Programs for rural populations in other regions of the country



Central New York Farm Progress Show



New York Farm Show (Syracuse, NY)



Empire Farm Days